



# The Writing Center

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
DENVER | ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

## American Psychological Association (APA) 7<sup>th</sup> Edition Style Guidelines

This handout presents the rules of APA style in the following sections: **Reference Entries, Reference Entry Examples, Missing Elements, Source Groups & Categories,** and **Reference List Formatting.** The last two sections deal with citing sources in your text: **In-Text Citations** goes over fundamental rules, and **Additional In-Text Citation Considerations** contains common citation questions for atypical sources.

### Reference Entries

Who. (When). What. Where.

This basic format is evident in all reference entries regardless of type. However, different source types may have particular rules regarding each element.

Element	Description
<b>Who</b>	The author(s) of the source material. List them in the order they appear in the source, using last names and first initials.  For some sources, the author will be an organization, corporation, or other entity (see “corporate authors” on p. 7)
<b>When</b>	The year the source was published. Some reference categories will ask for more details like month or season.
<b>What</b>	The name of the source you’re citing: this will be the title of an article, book, webpage, or other medium written in italics and using sentence-case <sup>1</sup>  If the source is part of a larger whole (like a chapter from a book), identify the “part” in plain text and the “whole” in italics.
<b>Where</b>	The location of the source—where it was published or accessed. This will list other information that identifies the source including publisher, editor, journal volume and issue, website, etc. This information will change depending on the type of source being cited.  Use the URL <sup>3</sup> or DOI <sup>4</sup> for electronic sources.

<sup>1</sup> **Sentence Case:** Capitalize the first word of the title, the first word of a subtitle (a phrase that follows a colon), and any proper nouns. Use lowercase letters for all other words in the title. *For journals only, use title case*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> **Title Case:** Capitalize all words of four or more letters.

<sup>3</sup> **URL:** Uniform Resource Locator, a web address for a source housed on the Internet.

<sup>4</sup> **DOI:** Digital Object Identifier, a permanent identification address for a source online. Usually found with scholarly journal articles.

### Rules for Number of Authors

(see following section for specific examples)

1 author: Last name, First initial / Bogart, H.

2 authors: Last name, First initial. & Last name, First initial. / Dickinson, T. & Sawyer, L.

3-20 authors: List them all separated by commas and use an ampersand before the last one (use the format shown above)

20+ authors: List the first 19 authors followed by an ellipsis and the last listed author (20 total).

## Reference Entry Examples

### Book

Humphries, F. (2013). *The post-American world*. W.W. Norton & Company.

Who

When

What

Where

### Section/Chapter of Book

Who

When

What

Zucko, D., & Dee, S. (2004). I pledge allegiance: The symbolism of the flag throughout American history. In I. Ward, P. West, & M. Lowell (Eds.), *Displays of nationalism across the globe*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 99-123). Globalization, Inc.

Where

## Journal

Who

Bain, J., Bixby, D., Blake, C., Lail, H.D., McWilliams, K., Jessen, E., Ellison, D., Vigil-Roach,

S., Kelly, R., Sheehan, D., Dickey, S, & Horst, A. (2019). Leading the writing center:

What

Developing confident and capable tutors using lead consultants. *Writing Center Journal*,

When

40(14), 6-20. <http://www.doi.org/1234.56/7890>

Where

## Website

Who

When

What

Avramova, N. (2019, January 3). *The secret to a long, happy, healthy life? Think age-positive.*

CNN. [https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/03/health/respect-toward-elderly-leads-to-long-life-](https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/03/health/respect-toward-elderly-leads-to-long-life-intl/index.html)

[intl/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/03/health/respect-toward-elderly-leads-to-long-life-intl/index.html)

Where

## Audiovisual

Who

When

What

Wild Candy. (2016, February 9). *Sneezing baby panda / original video.* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://youtu.be/93hq0YU3Gqk>

Where

## Missing Elements

Sometimes, sources won't have all the pieces you need to make a complete reference entry. Keep in mind that missing elements could be an indication of a lack of source credibility. In such cases, use the following substitutions.

Unknown author: substitute the title (move the title to the "who" position)

Unknown date: substitute (n.d.)

Unknown title: substitute a description of the source in [brackets]

If multiple elements are unknown, combine the above rules.

### Best-Case Online Source:

Kluger, J. (2019, July 18). *Elon Musk told us why he thinks we can land on the moon in 'less than 2 years.'* Time. <https://time.com/5628572/elon-musk-moon-landing/>

### Worst-Case Online Source:

[Description of Monty Python film and TV costumes from 1969-1979]. (n.d.). <http://www.montypythonforever.com/costumes/awesome>

## Source Groups and Categories

APA organizes source types into specific groups and categories. This is important because the category determines what information a reference entry will include. For specific questions outside the basic guidelines, determine what category of source you have and consult the handbook—the section numbers are included below.

Textual Works (10.1 – 10.8)	Periodicals Books & Reference Works Edited Book Chapters & Reference Entries Reports & Gray Literature Conference Sessions & Presentations Dissertations & Theses Reviews Unpublished/Informally Published Works
Data Sets, Software, Tests (10.9 – 10.11)	Data Sets Computer Software & Apps Tests, Scales, and Inventories
Audiovisual (10.12 – 10.14)	Audiovisual Works Audio Works Visual Works
Online (10.15 – 10.16)	Social Media Webpages & Websites

## Reference List Formatting

- Center “References” in bold type
- Alphabetize references by the first listed author’s last name (Don’t reorganize the list of authors within a work: cite them as they’re listed)
- Left-align references with a hanging indent of .5”
- Double-space all text
- Leave all other elements in plain text (no formatting)

## In-Text Citations

- APA uses an author-date citation system (e.g., Hughes, 1989) and prefers that parenthetical citations appear as close to the source material as possible.
- Source material should primarily be paraphrased rather than quoted directly. APA *recommends* the use of page numbers when paraphrasing. Use p. # (e.g., p. 4) for a single page and pp. #-# (e.g., pp. 2-4) for a range of pages.
- APA *requires* page numbers, heading/section names, or paragraph numbers following any use of direct quotation.
- Ampersands (&) are only used in parenthetical citations and on the References page.
- Whether or not elements are missing, use the “who” and “when” text from your reference entry

One (1) Author	
Paraphrase	<p>Underwood (2007) found that horror movies reflect the fears of a culture.</p> <p>Horror movies reflect a culture’s biggest fears (Underwood, 2007).</p>
Direct Quotations	<p>Underwood (2007) found that “the most pressing fears that preoccupy a culture often inform the genre of horror movies” (p. 276).</p> <p>This study determined that “the most pressing fears that preoccupy a culture often inform the genre of horror movies” (Underwood, 2007, p. 276), which agrees with my analysis.</p>

Two (2) Authors	
Paraphrase	<p>Eitzen and Zinn (2011) found that, since 1970, countries with American fast food corporations have increased by 250 percent.</p> <p>A recent study determined that sweatshops have gained an increasingly negative perception in industrialized countries (Eitzen &amp; Zinn, 2011).</p>
Direct Quotations	<p>Eitzen and Zinn (2011) found that “the negative impact of sweatshops on employment rates and GDP seems to ruffle more feathers than the exploitation of workers employed at these sweatshops” (pp. 276-277).</p> <p>This survey found that “the negative impact of sweatshops on employment rates and GDP seems to ruffle more feathers than the exploitation of workers employed at these sweatshops” (Eitzen &amp; Zinn, 2011, pp. 276-277).</p>

### Three or More (3+) Authors

Paraphrase	<p>Armstrong et al. (1994) found that at the height of cooperation between Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, Europe had constructed more libraries than churches, synagogues, or mosques.</p> <p>A historical analysis of the role of churches in the United States determined that religious leaders offered up their churches as places of refuge amidst violent cultural uprisings (Armstrong et al., 1994).</p>
Direct Quotations	<p>Armstrong et al. (1994) found that “major religions are often unfairly represented by their extremist elements” (p. 90).</p> <p>In fact, “major religions are often unfairly represented by their extremist elements” (Armstrong et al., 1994, p. 90).</p>

### Additional In-Text Citation Considerations

Corporate Authors:	<p>If there is no individual author listed, it is typically appropriate to list the organization or corporation as the author both in in-text citations and in the reference entry.</p> <p>If you are citing the source frequently throughout your work, you may introduce an abbreviation for the organization/corporation in brackets the first time you cite it. Then, use the abbreviation for all subsequent citations.</p> <p>The prevalence of schizophrenia in the general population is roughly 1 percent (National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2007).</p> <p>Subsequent citations: (NIMH, 2007).</p>
One Idea, Several Sources:	<p>When making comments such as “Several studies found” or “Many researchers have noted,” provide examples (listed alphabetically) of the studies and/or researchers, separated by semicolons.</p> <p>Many studies demonstrated that diagnoses of PTSD increased tenfold after WWI (Aster &amp; Ad, 2006; Martinez, 2009; Patel et al., 2008).</p>
Secondary Sources:	<p>Cite original sources whenever possible, but when citing a source referenced within another source, credit both authors using the following structure:</p> <p>According to Freud, the Oedipus Complex is related to superego development (as cited in Han, 1998).</p> <p>The Oedipus Complex is related to superego development (Freud, 1968, as cited in Han, 1998).</p>